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ABSTRACT

As an informational guide for trustees and members of presidential search committees, this paper presents a two-part outline describing the characteristics and responsibilities of the "ideal" community college president. The first part of the outline details presidential qualifications in terms of: (1) personality traits, including leadership ability, communication skills, enthusiasm, and good health; (2) educational background and prior experiences as a teacher, administrator, and manager; and (3) a personal philosophy committed to comprehensive education, educational innovation, and the college's mission and goals. The second part of the outline delineates general presidential functions in the areas of leadership and college management. These functions include acting as chief executive officer and providing guidance and inspiration to the entire college community; planning, implementing and evaluating programs; supervising line administrators; preparing a budget; coordinating college planning; and implementing personnel policies. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the potential usefulness of the outline in evaluating the performance of college presidents and in conducting a presidential job search. (JP)

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An "Ideal" Community College President:

A Position Description

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Nebraska Indian Community College

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An "Ideal" Community College President:

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Introduction

In a recent article, (Community College Review, Fall, 1979, pp. 37-41), James O. Hammons outlined characteristics of the "ideal" community college faculty member. While reading the article we wondered what factors might apply to other "ideal" educators in the community college. The president is of course the most important administrator in the community college, so a strong position description is essential. Advertisements for the position of presidsnt of a community college, as seen in The Chronicle of Higher Education, vary greatly in the detail of their requirements. Still, certain characteristics are repeated in almost every advertisement.

The "ideal" community college president position description can serve as a guide for boards of trustees in selection, and for the faculty search committee in establishing standards for nominees and applicants. The position description may serve to inspire those persons who desire to be a community college president, or, stated another way, it may serve to discourage those who are not willing to meet the standards required.

The position description is divided into two categories, qualifications and functions. Qualifications include the broad background of personality and experience that form the basis of a president's attitudes and abilities. Functions include the many duties a president must be able to perform for the success of the college.

Each general area has more specific sub-divisions:

I. Qualifications
   A. Personality Traits
   B. Education and Experience
      1. Training
      2. Teaching and Administration
      3. Management
      4. Practical Applications
   C. Philosophy

II. Functions
   A. Leadership
   B. Management

Board Policy

IDEAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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TITLE: Position Description for President

I. Qualifications
   A. Personality Traits
      1. Overall leadership qualities which command respect and loyalty from all members of the college community.

2. Exceptional written and verbal communication skills.
3. Enthusiasm
4. Good judgment
5. Empathy for all college constituants
6. Good health and stamina to meet the pressures of the position, and age appropriate for the expectation of a reasonable length of service.

B. Education and Experience

1. Training: an earned doctorate
2. Teaching and Administration
   a. Five to ten years teaching experience in a community college.
   b. Experience in a multi-campus setting; small rural setting; etc.
   c. Three to five years of line administrative experience at a community college.
   d. Ten years of overall professional experience in higher education: preference for community college.
3. Management
   a. Demonstrated skills in planning, organization, decision-making, and leadership in a high level position at a comprehensive community college.
   b. Business experience, including demonstrated skills of fiscal and budgeting understanding and preparation.
   c. Evidence of productive community relations.

4. Practical Applications
   a. Demonstrated achievements as a national leader in higher education.
   b. Demonstrated ability to develop innovative educational programs.
   c. Evidence of a positive record working in an environment of faculty participation in governance.
   d. Experience in faculty and staff collective bargaining and personnel administration.
   e. Experience in dealing with the state legislature.
   f. Evidence of positive experiences with alumni and students.
   g. Experience in fund-raising.
   h. Experience in working with a Board of Trustees.

C. Philosophy
   1. Committment to the educational goals of a comprehensive community college.
   2. Committment to the philosophy and goals of open admission.
   3. Committment to sound educational innovation.

II. Functions
   A. Leadership
      1. Provide effective guidance and inspiration to the various constituencies of the institution.
      2. Function as the chief administrative officer of the college.

3. Maintain effective relations with sponsors, professionals, and non-professionals.

B. Management

1. Plan, implement, and evaluate the programs, services, and operations of the college, and report directly to the Board of Trustees.
2. Supervise significant line-administrative responsibilities.
3. Prepare, propose, allocate, and maintain a balanced budget.
4. Coordinate planning and physical development.
5. Implement personnel policies.

Conclusion

Several practical uses can be made from the "ideal" position description. It may be impossible to find even one person who possesses all the desired qualities listed above. The existence of an idealistic standard provides a measure for current and aspiring presidents. The absence of a goal precludes a lack of striving, and the presence of one may provids needed inspiration.

In 1978, Kenneth P. Mortimer and T.R. McConnell stated, "The periodic evaluation of presidents and other major administrative officers will require systematic procedures based on well-defined standards of effective performance." (p. 181). Our purpose in writing the "ideal" position description was to state the goals and standards set by search committees so that specific objectives could be set

based on well-defined standards of effective performance.

Two other major uses of this article are to: (1)serve as a guide for faculty search committees in setting standards for presidential applicants and nominations, and (2)serve as a guide for selection of a new president by the board of trustees.

With the establishment of written goals in a position description and objectives based on those goals, the board of trustees will also have an effective instrument for evaluation of tne president's performance.

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